

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KATHMA 03908 021238Z

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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2772

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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1. IN A WIDE-RANGING INTERVIEW WITH A REPORTER OF THE GOVERNMENT PRESS AGENCY PUBLISHED AUGUST 31, PRIME MINISTER NAGENDRA PRASAD RIJAL STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT, "HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED FOR (SIC) FURTHER CONSOLIDATING THE PARTYLESS DEMOCRATIC PANCHAYAT SYSTEM AND FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD NOT HESITATE TO TAKE ANY ACTION." RIJAL WENT ON TO EXPLAIN THAT BECAUSE OF THE "EXIGENCIES" OF THE CURRENT SITUATION, THE GON WAS OBLIGED TO ADOPT MEASURES TO "SAFEGUARD" THE COUNTRY. WITH OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAIMED IN INDIA, THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO REMARKED THAT RECENT ARRESTS OF PANCHAYAT MEMBERS, THE CRACKDOWN ON THE STUDENTS, AND THE BANNING OF SOME NEWSPAPERS AS THE RESULT OF THE NEW PRESS AND PUBLICATION ACT DID NOT "IN ANY WAY FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF WHAT WERE (SIC) TAKING PLACE IN THE SUBCONTINENT," BUT RATHER WERE "ADMINISTRATIVE" MOVES. NOTING THAT THE LITTLE PUBLICIZED BLACK MARKET CONTROL ACT WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PRODUCTS OF THE RECENTLY COMPLETED RASHTRIYA PANCHAYAT SESSION, RIJAL STATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE THE "SEVEREST" MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE ACT BECAUSE IT DIRECTLY AFFECTED THE DAILY LIFE OF THE PEOPLE. ON A MORE POSITIVE NOTE, RIJAL CHARACTERIZED RELATIONS WITH INDIA AS "BETTER," HINTED THAT SOME OF THE ARRESTED STUDENTS WOULD BE RELEASED, AND STATED THAT MEASURES TO ASSIST NEWSPAPERS WOULD SOON BE MADE

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PAGE 02 KATHMA 03908 021238Z

PUBLIC.

2. COMMENT: RIJAL'S TOUGH STATEMENT

CAPS A WEEK DURING WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER IN AN
UNUSUAL MOVE CALLED IN ALL CABINET SECRETARIES FOR A PEP
TALK ON VIGOROUSLY IMPLEMENTING THE NEW FIVE YEAR PLAN,

PERSONNEL ATTENDANCE CHECKS WERE CARRIED OUT AT ALL
GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, AND 22 UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS AND
EMPLOYEES WERE DISMISSED FOR HAVING INCITED SOME OF THE RECENT
STUDENT DISTURBANCES. THESE MEASURES, AS WELL AS THOSE DISCUSSED
BY THE PRIME MINISTER APPEAR TO REFLECT THE PALACE'S DESIRE
TO TIGHTEN CONTROL OVER THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT AND
GALVANIZE IT INTO ACTION AGAINST THE TWO MOST PRESSING AND
NOTICEABLE PROBLEMS OF SLOW NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HIGH
PRICES FOR ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES. CARGO

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